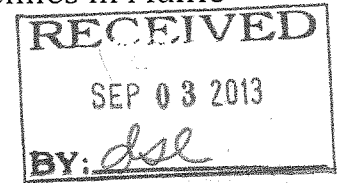


# Letter of Intent to Open Adventures in Learning Career Academies in Maine

## Adventures in Learning Career Academies



### PURPOSE

The compelling purpose that animates everyone at Adventures in Learning Career Academies (ALCA) is launching all students to lives of success and significance in academic, technical and professional careers. By combining rigorous academic preparation with industry-standard certification programs, ALCA will inspire every student to dream big, motivate every student to work hard, and celebrate a generation of students who make their dreams come true.



By operating a coordinated secondary program for grades 6-12, ALCA will follow the admonition of President Abraham Lincoln to "Be sure you put your feet in the right place, then stand firm." ALCA is determined to be that "right place" for the children of Portland Schools and those students who will come to our program from neighboring districts. We will "stand firm" to deliver opportunity for all and multiple high-quality pathways to success.

Rather than focus exclusively on college or vocational or technical preparation, ALCA's integrated approach is simultaneous pursuit of scholarship and practical application. The result is an invigorating school setting that provides career education to students exposed to occupational opportunities early in their academic experience.

### EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

ALCA will serve as a nation-wide model of innovation in urban schooling by graduating students who are both college and career ready. The ALCA program will be based on two key design elements that will work together to prepare at-risk students in Portland Schools for multiple paths to success. The success of the school will encourage young people in the community to see high school graduation as a clear route to a variety of rewarding careers, and will instill a greater sense of cultural, civic, and community pride for all.

The first key design element is a unique middle school/high school program aimed at simultaneously developing academic and career competencies through a multidisciplinary integrated curriculum. We believe that, in order to

make informed choices about college and careers in high school, students must be provided with academic, career and cultural opportunities at an early age in a nurturing yet demanding environment. At the outset, students in the ALCA Program will be engaged in assessment and attainment of academic skills that will prepare them for secondary training, higher education, and career entry. Students will be prepared to seamlessly transition into the high school program, leveraging the rigorous academic training of their middle school years.

The second element is exposure from the outset to occupational opportunities in licensed/certified career fields. ALCA will offer preparation for a range of practical and technical education programs to students enhanced by exposure to professionals and career counselors with expertise in those varied occupations. Students will be well-informed, and focused, as well as prepared to pursue these in-demand opportunities. Therein lays the innovation: structured and intensive preparation of well-informed, motivated students as precursor to and continuation of secondary education.

There is a growing need for secondary schools to provide high school graduates with the skills they need to be successful College graduates, as well as licensed/certified professionals. Providing rigorous and effective training for career options at the secondary level is especially crucial for at-risk students, including those who are English language learners and/or require academic skills remediation. The ALCA model therefore epitomizes the current charter law's mandate that charter schools seek to provide the quality educational options which are currently lacking for these groups. Further, it takes advantage of the charter law's flexibility in teacher hiring and certification to select high school instructors with expertise in rewarding occupational fields as well as skill in reaching at-risk students.

#### WHAT ARE CAREER ACADEMIES?

A career academy is a type of school-within-a-school or small learning community (SLC) that provides a college-preparatory curriculum with a career-related theme.

#### THE ALCA STRUCTURE

ALCA will have three academies: Business Academy, Healthcare Academy, and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Academy. Each

academy comprises a cluster of students who have some of the same teachers, and who share several classes each year. A group of teachers from both academic and technical disciplines are scheduled to have only or mostly academy students in their classes, meet with each other on a regular basis, and share in decision-making related to curriculum content and instruction.

Each career academy combines a college-preparatory curriculum with its career theme. Academic courses that meet high school graduation and college entrance requirements are linked with technical courses in the academy's field of work. Teachers have shared planning time to coordinate course content and instructional strategies. Career exploration and employability skill development may take place in the career-technical courses and in one or more academic courses. Work-based learning opportunities for students tie classroom activities to internships with local employer partners. College and career counseling informs students about options and planning for employment and further education.

ALCA will also hold partnerships with employers and postsecondary education. A Business Advisory Board for the academy will include representatives from the local employment services community and from community and universities, as well as academy faculty and administrators from ALCA. Advisory board members give advice on curriculum, appear as guest speakers in classes, host field trips, supervise student internships, provide financial or in-kind support, and some will serve as mentors for individual students.

**Adventures in Learning k-12 Inc.** is an educational services provider specializing in skills development and dropout intervention services. The company was founded in 1999 by the owner, nationally recognized educator Delia Armstrong-Busby.

The company has been state-certified to provide supplemental literacy services in Missouri, Texas and Colorado where it offers developmental and intervention literacy skills development instruction and curriculum on an individual level.

The company has contracted to provide dropout intervention program designs in Denver under the Great Kids Initiative and also through state funding under the Tony Grampas Grant for Dropout Intervention. The Absence Addiction

Dropout Intervention developed by the Company was selected as a model program for presentation in the National Guard Drug Interdiction Program and the Denver Mayor's Dropout Prevention Program as well as by the US Department of Education national conference on Dropouts.

Systemic Dropout Intervention Designs were also offered in Colorado Springs School District 11 at Doherty, Coronado and Wasson and Mitchell High Schools as well as Galileo-East Middle School and elementary schools such as Helen Hunt and John Adams.

Services provided to the board for the Adventures in Learning Career Academies are donated, as the board is autonomous and separate from the company as required by law. Adventures in Learning k-12 Inc. is an IRS identified nonprofit.

**Adventures in Learning Career Academies** intends to enroll students in grades 6-12. Beginning School Year 2014 the projected opening enrollment is 100 6<sup>th</sup>-graders in five sections of 20 students each. Each subsequent year, 100 new 6<sup>th</sup>-graders will be enrolled. Anticipated enrollment beginning School Year 2019 is 600 students.

CONTACT PERSON

  
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